Psychosocial Characters of Street Working Children In the Northern Part of the Gaza Strip (Comparative study)

Osama Said Hamdouna
osama_h67@yahoo.com

Department of Psychology
Faculty of Education
Al-Azhar University-Gaza

Abstract: *The main goal of this research is to identify whether there are significant statistical differences in a number of psychosocial characters, between working and non- working children in the northern part of the Gaza Strip. The sample was formed of 2 groups of male children, the first one is the working children group (56), and non- working children group (32).The method used is the comparative and descriptive method, as it is the most suitable one for such study. The main instrument used is the psychosocial characters scale for children designed by the researcher, it includes the following dimensions:, social relation, personality strength, anxiety, family relation, morality, academic self concept, aggression, independence , and external physical appearance satisfaction. The research outcome revealed that there are no significant statistical differences in all of the psychosocial characters except the level of independence, between working and non- working children groups, such difference is in favor of non-working children.*

الملخص: هدفت الدراسة إلي معرفة إذا ما كان هناك فروق ذات دلالة إحصائية فـــي بعـــض الخصائص النفسية الاجتماعية بين الأطفال اللذين يعملون في الشوارع والأطفال غير العاملين في المنطقة الشمالية بقطاع غزة وقد تكونت عينة الدراسة من ((88)) من الأطفال الذكور وقـــد تـــم تقسيم العينة إلي مجموعتين الأولي مجموعة الأطفال العاملين في الشوارع وقوامها (56) طفلاً في حين تكونت المجموعة الثانية من ((32)) طفلا من غير العـــاملين ولقـــد تـــم اســـتخدام مقيـــاس الخصائص النفسية والاجتماعية للأطفال (من إعداد الباحث) وقد اتبع الباحث المـــنهج الوصـــفي

التحليلي باعتباره المنهج الأنسب لمثل هذه الدراسات. كشفت نتائج الدراسة عن عدم وجود فروق ذات دلالة إحصائية بين الأطفال العاملين وغير العاملين في جميع أبعاد مقياس الخصائص النفسية والاجتماعية للأطفال باستثناء بعد الاستقلالية، فقد إشارات النتائج إلى وجود فروق دالة إحــصائية بين المجموعتين وقد كانت الفروق في صالح الأطفال غير العاملين.

1. Introductory Theoretical Frame:

1.1 The phenomenon of "street children" and child labor: in the light of some psychosocial variables

The target group of this research is the children who work in the streets of the Northern part of the Gaza Strip; therefore I believe it is essential to focus on the phenomenon of street children from the theoretical and conceptual point of view. In 1980s UNICEF suggested a distinction between "children on the street" and "children of the street", based on a research carried out in Latin America. Children "on the street" are the children, for whom "the home ceases to be their center for play, culture and daily life" (Save the Children, 2000, p.15).

The street becomes their day time activity, but most of these children come back home at night, nevertheless sometimes their family relationships may be deteriorating, but still in place: in fact "these children continue to view life from the point of view of their families'. The children "of the street" are a much smaller number of children who daily struggle for survival without family support, alone. Although they are often called "abandoned" children, in some cases they choose to leave their families because of violence or abuses. The links with the family are broken, so actually they are without a family. A further distinction is proposed by UNICEF and other agencies between abandoned children, who do not have any contact with their families and children who choose the street as their home and occasionally have some contacts with their parents (UNICEF,1999, p.45).

As a common point of view, "children on the street" or "children in the street" are normally considered as definitions for those girls and boys who carry out some economic activities in the street, often on the behalf of their parents. "Street children" or "children of the street" are used for the children and adolescents who are living in a situation of

abandon: they consider the street as a home and in some cases they could be involved not only in economic activities but even criminal ones (I.L.O.2006, p.24).

Other agencies, as World Health Organization and UNESCO, gave further subgroups of the category of street children, although based on the suggestions of UNICEF. For example WHO includes in the group of street children even the children living in protection centers or orphanages, who are at risk of becoming homeless due to the difficult psychological and social conditions in which they live in. (DCI, 2006, p.12).

If we want to define some criteria on which the different definitions of street children are based, we could say that they are referred to: the place of residence of the children, the type of familial relationship, the time spent on the street (Save the Children, 2000, p.25).

Save the Children criticized the application on the reality of the various "street children" categories, because the result is not clear and the border between these categories is sometimes very difficult to be identified. In the projects' documents of some agencies, even of UNICEF, the definitions of children, who have experiences of life and work on the street, take as reference this terminology (Children in the street, children of the street, children on the street), but the distinction between "of" and "on" or "in" are rarely clear and in the same projects the prepositions are used for each category irrespective to the previous definitions. (Musleh D., Taylor K., 2005, p.13)

One must consider the reality: for example, sometimes the children defined as "children on the street" actually remain for long periods of time without seeing their families, or, on the other hand, children defined as "street children" could not be present permanently in the street, as sometimes they can be in prison, in some institutes or they go back home for a while.

According to the international labor office, the main problem of these categories lies on the definition of home, family and street itself. It is assumed that according to the culture of Northern countries, children are secure inside the house, which represents the reference place within the family circle. In this sense the child would be protected from the external world, considered as dangerous, thanks to the home's boundaries. But in many realities of the world socialization and family relationships develop outside the home, on the street. This

is the case of many communities in the economically poor countries, where children playing on the street are not street children, in the sense of modern urban context. (International Labour Office, 2006, p.24).

Actually in the modern city centers the street should be called "avenue", "boulevard", so as other urban places such as bus stations or shopping malls. All these are spaces where children are "out of place", i.e. contexts where they are supposed to be accompanied by adults, as these places are dangerous or in any case not fit for children. These places are different from the concept of street belonging to a village or a quarter in a non urban area, therefore some authors prefer to speak of "out of place" children, instead of "street children", when we consider modern realities (Save the Children, 2004, p.13).In the light of these definitions and reflections, it seems important to put the protagonists of this research into a flexible definition of "children on the street". This category, which we consider susceptible to the changes and different tones, according to specific cultural, social and political contexts, represents a high percentage of the children's and adolescents' population of the Gaza Strip and the Palestinian Occupied Territories. The meaning of the term "children on the street", emerging through the research, was suggested by the interviewed children themselves, through their declarations, witnesses and representations of the contexts where they live. As a result we understood that the street is the place of meeting, of working, where friendships are being made, the main theatre of the Palestinian social life, the street takes the place of a house and becomes a courtyard when children want to meet each other and play. We have to consider that more than 2/3 of the population lives in the refugee camps, where the spaces are small and highly populated. Accordingly the researcher thinks that, the phenomenon of street children does not exist in the Gaza Strip, in its exact meaning of children out of the family, who identify the street as replacement of their home and context in which the relations with friends replace the family ones. The structure of Palestinian society is still based on the family, or better to say, on the familial clan, which is still the foundation of a culture characterized by solidarity. In this context, it is very difficult to find situations of children's abandon or separation from the family, as the ethic and cultural values are very distant from this possibility, even though the

social and economic hardships have worsened. The combined family system still represents a sheet-anchor for the corroboration and mutual help of the most families.

1.2 The international position toward child labor:

At international level there are three different positions

The abolitionist approach is backed by the International Labor Organization, which aims to the complete elimination of child labor. On this model they founded the concept of schooling as the main instrument to combat child labor. ILO operated from early 1970s in the elaboration of conventions and recommendations to regulate the phenomenon in the member States, focusing principles and minimum rules of protection, as the basis for domestic laws. In 1992 ILO launched the International Program on the Elimination of Child Labor (IPEC).

ILO Convention 1973 (No. 138) and its Recommendation No. 146 have been representing until today the fundamental reference for the abolitionist approach, obligating the member States to implement national policies to ensure the elimination of child labor. This convention establishes that the minimum age of admission to work must not be less than the age of completing compulsory education and in any case it must not be under 15 years[1]. One of the self-defeating effects of this convention is that, if in the legal point of view the children are not permitted to work under a certain age, those who are working – and they are many in number– must carry it out in complete clandestineness, paradoxically without any type of legal, social or syndicate's protection.

ILO Convention 1999 (No.182) set the boundaries of the worst and unacceptable forms of child labor and the immediate action for their elimination. Its Recommendation No. 190 urges the creation and implementation of national measures to face the extreme forms of exploitation. The indicated worst forms are as follows: all forms of slavery and serfdom, the sale and trafficking of children, forced or compulsory labor, recruitment of children for armed conflict; the use, procuring or offering of a child for prostitution, for the production of pornography or for pornographic performances; for illicit activities, in

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[1] The countries whose economy and institutions are insufficiently developed may, after consultation with organizations of employers and workers concerned, initially specify a minimum age of 14 years, notwithstanding the provisions of the Convention.

particular for the production and trafficking of drugs; any work which is likely to harm the health, safety or morals of children, exposing them to physical, psychological or sexual abuses, to difficult environmental conditions, to long or night shifts, to use dangerous technologies, machines or substances (Ministry of Social Affairs, 2005, p.26).

The pragmatic approach recognizes the real difficulty in the elimination of child labor, especially under a short-term perspective. It does not exclude the possibility for a child to work; therefore this approach urges actions with the aims of: ameliorating the conditions in which the children can work and eliminating the worst forms of exploitation. This position is backed by UNICEF and several NGOs.

The critical appraisal approach or *empowerment approach* does not consider the child work as negative or detrimental for itself and therefore that the work should not always be eliminated and condemned. This approach appreciates the work, but taking into account the conditions in which it is carried out and considering if respects the fundamental rights of the children as listed in the International Convention on children's rights[1].

This view underlines the possibility of a positive value of the work in the whole development of the child, in his or her involvement in the life of the community, which he or she belongs to. It considers the work as "an important aspect in the socialization processes and as a rational reaction to the bonded opportunities which are at the disposal of families and children in many realities, especially in the Southern countries of the world: in this case the aim is to make work and school complementary" (Liebel, M., Overwien B, 2001, p.38).

The main promoter of the critical appraisal approach is Save the Children which is active in different countries of Latin America, Africa and Asia. It recognizes the value of social processes for claiming their own rights and the importance of roots level participation. Work is one of the modalities to actively participate in the community and economy and to build social identity. Today the organized working children and adolescents are joined together as unique International Movement, for defending the rights of the

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[1] The International Convention on the children's rights was unanimously approved by UN General Assembly on November 20, 1989; it is the international instruments concerning the protection of children's rights with the largest number of ratifications in the world.

childhood allover the world (Save the Children, 2004, p48).

A child labor may have some different psychosocial characters combared to non-working children , one study revealed that a number of working children suffer from some psychosocial problems such as hyperactivity, emotional problems, conduct disorder, while most of the children were had good peer relations. Some other working children suffered from obsessive compulsive problems, social phobia, generalized anxiety, separation anxiety, finally most of the children labour had depression (Matar, 2005).Finally it deserves mentioning that in the West Bank, the child Employment is rooted in the political and socio-economic conditions, and it has its negative consequences upon children and community development as a whole (Al shami & Abu-Ata, 2003).

2. Literature Review

According to the researcher knowledge, there is a clear shortage in researches examine the psychosocial characters of the Palestinian child labor in particular, however, statistics studies about child labor in Palestine is available, this is beside a very limited number of previous studies one of which is the study of Taddi, 2007, conducted in the Gaza Strip, this study aimed at promoting the knowledge, awareness and implementation of children's rights in the Gaza Strip, to promote social and educational inclusion of street and working children who live in conditions of marginalization; and to ameliorate the hard conditions of poverty and marginalization of the children by promoting activities on topics of peace, no violence and gender and helping them to protect their rights. Focus groups and semi-structure interviews were used as data collection. The outcomes of the research validated the starting hypothesis that in the Gaza Strip there are children on the street, but not street children, as family and familial clan remain the principal points of reference for children and adolescents, although people live in very unstable economic conditions which, together with other factors, caused the high percentage of working children. The street is a very important sharing place for the Palestinian children and adolescents, where they learn new knowledge. Education is one of the most important subjects addressed in the research. 94% of the children answered that they attend school and only 6% admitted not to attend. Education often reproduces violence, in two modalities: the transmission of models of

representation of the reality and the usage of violent disciplinary measures. Another study is the study of (Matar, 2005) this study aimed to identify the prevalence of mental health of labour children in the Gaza Strip. The results indicated that the average age of labour child was 14.8% years. The average of family members was 9 persons. The study showed that 41% of children work to improve the family income, 51% of children are still in schools, the study outcome also revealed that 33.9% of the children reported hyperactivity; 38% reported emotional problems; 56.3% reported conduct disorder; 79.1% of the children had good peer relations. In addition, (Spence) Anxiety scale showed that 20.6% of the children reported obsessive compulsive problems; 18% reported social phobia; 17.7% had generalized anxiety; 15.3% had separation anxiety, and finally 76.4% of the children labour had depression. Al shami and Abu-Ata (2003) conducted another study in the West Bank, the study investigated child Employment in Palestine. The study attempted to answer three key research questions: What were the driving forces for child Employment? What were the consequences of child Employment on children and society? And what measurements should be taken to prevent children from being employed? A review of related literature revealed the different dimensions of child Employment, and helped to develop the Hypotheses of the study. An examination of hypothesized relationship between demographics and child Employment revealed the existence of significant relationship among the variables. The study managed to identify the main characteristics of child Employment and the measurements to be taken in order to reduce the level of child Employment. Finally, the study concluded that child Employment is rooted in the political and socio-economic conditions, and it has its negative consequences upon children and community development as a whole. Another study is the one conducted by Aray and Alem (2006), the objectives of this study are to estimate the prevalence and describe the nature of behavioral and mental health problems, as well as child abuse, nutritional problems, gross physical illness and injury among child laborers aged 8 to 15 years in Ethiopia. However, only the behavioral and mental health problems of the study population are examined here. Results revealed that: A total of 2000 child laborers and 400 non-laborers were interviewed using RQC to screen for probable cases of behavioral and mental problems. Of

these, 50% of the laborers and 42% of the non-laborers were males. The mean age of the laborers was 13.8 ±1.8 years while that of the non-laborers was 12.2 ±2.1 years. More females (76.8%) were found to have been engaged in domestic labor than males. The RQC interview screened 9.4% (n=226) of the children as probable cases of mental/ behavioral disorders, (14.0% non-laborers and 8.5% laborers). The second stage DICA interview gave an overall prevalence of 5.5% (4.9% in laborers and 8.8% in non-laborers). The study conclusion stated that, the prevalence of childhood behavioral and mental disorders on children of the same age group. in this study is within the range reported in previews conducted studies. The Central Bureau of Statistics conducted a survey in 2004 with a sample size of 10,334 households with 8,601 households having at least one child. Of the children in the survey sample, only 1.7 percent meet the definition of child labor as used by the survey. Child labor, according to PCBS, is defined as unpaid family work, domestic work, or any type of paid work. For children ages 12 to 14 years, working more than 14 hours per week is considered child labor. For children ages 15 to 17 years, working more than 40 hours per week is considered child labor (Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, 2004).

3. Problem statement

According to the above mentioned introductory theoretical frame, and literature review the research problem can be represented through the following basic question and sub questions:

The research basic question

Are there significant statistical differences in the levels of a number of psychosocial characters, between the street working children and non-working children?

The basic question is branched into the following sub questions:

Is there a significant statistical difference in the level of social relations, between the street working children and non-working children?

Is there a significant statistical difference in the level of personality strength, between the street working children and non-working children?

Is there a significant statistical difference in the level of external physical appearance satisfaction, between the street working children and non-working children?

Is there a significant statistical difference in the level of self concept of achievement, between the street working children and non-working children?

Is there a significant statistical difference in the level of anxiety, between the street working children and non-working children?

Is there a significant statistical difference in the moral level, between the street working children and non-working children?

Is there a significant statistical difference in the level of familial relations, between the street working children and non-working children?

Is there a significant statistical difference in the level of independence- dependence, between the street working children and non-working children?

Is there a significant statistical difference in the level of aggression, between the street working children and non-working children?

4. Importance of the research

This research represents an attempt to study the impact of a relatively a new phenomenon (street working children) on the children in the North area of the Gaza Strip. Accordingly such study will provide us with some quantities and to some extent qualitative data that can be used in the planning and development sectors. Also this research is considered as an attempt to attract our Palestinian community attention toward such relatively new phenomenon.

5. Aim of the research

This research aims to find out whether there are significant statistical differences in some psychosocial characters (social relation, personality strength, , external physical appearance satisfaction, self concept of achievement, anxiety, morality, familial relations, independence, and aggression) between street working children and non-working children, as an attempt to know the psychological impact of the street work on the working children.

6.The operational definitions of the research terms

The following terms were used in this research:

Psychosocial characters

The target psychosocial characters in this research include: social relation, Personality strength, External physical appearance satisfaction, The academic self concept, Independent – dependent,

anxiety, moral dimension, , familial relations and aggression.

Social relations
A child being able to make good relations with other people, and to have mutual respect with others, in addition to the child feelings, that he or she is trusted by other people around him or her.

Personality strength
The personality strength can be expressed when a child has an optimistic view of the things, depending upon himself or herself, having an independent opinion, having ability to take responsibility, and feeling with his or her own personality strength.

External physical appearance satisfaction
It refers to the child's opinion about his or her external physical appearance and the level of the child satisfaction about his or her appearance.

The academic self concept
It refers to the child's own opinion about his or her vision concerning some academic matters, that reflects or builds the academic self concept.

Anxiety
It refers to whether or not the child has the main symptoms of anxiety such as, sleeping difficulties and lack of self control etc.

Moral dimension
It refers to the child's opinion about the level of his or her morality or it refers to the child's commitment to the moral behavior

Familial relations
It refers to the nature of the child's relation with his or her own family and whether such relation is mutually good or not.

Independent - dependent
It refers to the child's level of independence or dependence in his or her daily life behaviors.

Aggression
It refers to the child's common behavior whether it is aggressive or not.

Street working children

It refers to those male children who live in the northern part of the Gaza Strip (Biet Hanoon, Beit Lahia and Jabalia Camp) and carry out some economic activities in the street, beside their school attendance, often on the behalf of their parents.

7. Methodological Procedures:

Study Method
The researcher adopted the discriptive analytical method as it is the most suitable one for such study.

Sample
A convenient sample was choosed, such sample consisted of 88 male children such sample was devided into two main groups; the first was consisted of 56 working children as a case group, and the second group was consisted of 32 non working children as a control group.

In addition; the following tables shows the demographic data of the sample that includes age, father education and mother education, knowing that the families of the two groups have got no regular monthly salarry and children in the two groups attend schools, this reflect to some extent the valence between the two groups in the economic status and education.

Table 1: distribution of the sample according to the age

Age	Working		Non working	
	N	%	N	%
7 years	6	10.7	3	9.4
8 years	4	7.1	4	12.5
9 years	3	5.4	3	9.4
10 years	5	8.9	7	21.9
11 years	5	8.9	3	9.4
12 years	5	8.9	2	6.3
13 years	14	25.0	5	15.6
14 years	14	25.0	5	15.6
Total	56	100.0	32	100.0

Table 2: distribution of the sample according to the father education

Father education	Working		Non working	
	N	%	N	%
Not educated	8	14.3	5	15.6
Primary	11	19.6	4	12.5
Preparatory	16	28.6	8	25.0
Secondary	12	21.4	6	18.8
Diploma	4	7.1	4	12.5
University	5	8.9	5	15.6
Total	56	100.0	32	100.0

Table 3: distribution of the sample according to the mother education

Father education	Working		Non working	
	N	%	N	%
Not educated	8	14.3	3	9.4
Primary	13	23.2	3	9.4
Preparatory	15	26.8	11	34.4
Secondary	11	19.6	6	18.8
Diploma	4	7.1	6	18.8
University	5	8.9	3	9.4
Total	56	100.0	32	100.0

Table 4: The valence of some variables between case and control groups

Variables	Working state	N	Mean	S.D	T. value df = 86	P. value
Age	Working	56	11.5000	2.41962	1.538	0.128
	Non working	32	10.6875	2.32014		
Father education	working	56	3.1429	1.44510	0.967	0.336
	Non working	32	3.4688	1.64580		
Mother education	working	56	3.0893	1.45573	1.483	0.142
	Non working	32	3.5625	1.41279		
Last year achievement	working	56	62.7321	6.29138	0.316	0.760
	Non working	32	62.3125	5.99698		

Study Instrument.

The main tool used in this research is the psychosocial characters scale for children, prepared by the researcher, such scale is formed of 9 dimensions, and such dimensions are: Social Relation (12 items), Personality Strength (24 items), External Physical Appearance Satisfaction (13 items), Academic Self Concept (12 items), anxiety (8 items), moral aspect (14 items), familial relations (17 items), and aggression (12 items). The response on every item of the scales has three alternatives as (Yes=3, Sometimes=2, No=1), the scores will collected upon every subscale, taking into account that high score means a high level of personality character, while the low scores means a low level of personality character.

The validity and reliability of such sub-scales were examined on a pilot study sample formed of 40 children the results of such examination can be shown as follows:

Validity of Sub-scales of psychosocial characters for children

The researcher use the *Mann-Whitney Test* "U" to compare means of ranks of psychosocial characters among the scores of extreme groups (27% of the lowest scores = 9) and (27% of the highest scores = 9) of the pilot sample:

Table 5: Mann-Whitney Test comparing means of ranks of sub-scales of psychosocial characters.

Variable	U value	Z value	P value
Social Relations	0.00	3.61	0.001 ***
Personality	0.00	3.60	0.001 ***
External Appearance and Body	0.00	3.65	0.001 ***
Academic Self Concept	0.00	3.67	0.001 ***
Anxiety	0.00	3.59	0.001 ***
Ethics	0.00	3.61	0.001 ***
Familial Relations	0.00	3.62	0.001 ***
Independent – Dependent Trait	0.00	3.60	0.001 ***
Aggression	0.00	3.61	0.001 ***

*p< 0.05   **p< 0.01   ***p< 0.001

As shown in the previous table; **U** values show that there were significant statistical differences between extreme lowest and highest scores of two comparative groups (P= 0.001), in favor to the highest

scores group.

This result revealed that; sub-scales of the measurement device can differentiate between two extreme groups.

Reliability of Sub-scales of psychosocial characters.

Researcher estimated the reliability of sub-scales of psychosocial characters scale by using the equation of Cronbach's alpha; as shown in the following table:

Table: 6 Shows reliability of sub-scales of psychosocial characters by using Cronbach's alpha

Sub-scales of personality	Items	alpha
Social Relations	12	0.669
Personality	24	0.826
External Appearance and Body	13	0.611
Academic Self Concept	12	0.796
Anxiety	8	0.771
Ethics	14	0.799
Familial Relations	17	0.885
Independent – Dependent Trait	22	0.687
Aggression	12	0.749

The values of alpha, ranged between (0.611 – 0.885), The Sub-scales of the measurement device is valid and reliable for data collection from the study sample of working and non working children in the Gaza Strip.

8. Outcomes

The street working children were compared with a group of non-working children in nine psychosocial characters, as an attempt to know the impact of work on the personality of street working children. **T-** Test was used to compare between the scores of the two groups, and the statistical analysis has revealed the following results. High scores of each dimension means that a child has a high level of such psychosocial characters, except the high scores of bipolar dimension of independent – dependent that means the child is more independent than the other who has low scores.

8.1. Social Relations

As shown in table 7; there is no significant statistical difference in the level of social relation dimension between the street working children and non-working children. (t = 0.465; df= 86, P= 0.643).

Table 7: Independent t-test comparing means of Social Relations according to work state

Variable	Street working children		Un-working children N = 32		T- value df = 86	P value
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
Social Relations	19.94	2.746	18.22	2.445	0.465	0.643

*p< 0.05   **p< 0.01   ***p< 0.001

8.2. Personality Strength

As shown in table 8; there is no significant statistical difference in personality strength between the street working children and non-working children. (t = 0.714, df= 86, P= 0.477).

Table 8: Independent t-test comparing means of Personality strength according to work state

Variable	Street working children N = 56		Non-working children N = 32		T- value df = 86	P value
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
Personality strength	59.39	5.789	60.37	6.880	0.714	0.477

*p< 0.05   **p< 0.01   ***p< 0.001

8.3. External Physical Appearance Satisfaction

As shown in table 9; there is no significant statistical difference in the level of physical appearance satisfaction between the street working children and non-working children (t = 0.474, df= 86, P= 0.636).

Table 9: Independent t-test comparing means of external physical appearance satisfaction according to work state

Variable	Street working children N = 56		Non-working children N = 32		T- value Df = 86	P value
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
External Appearance and Body satisfaction	32.76	4.013	33.16	3.049	0.474	0.636

  *p< 0.05   **p< 0.01   ***p< 0.001

8.4. The Academic Self Concept

As shown in table 10; there are no significant statistical differences in the level o self concept of achievement between the street working children and non-working children (t = 0.440, df= 86, P= 0.661).

Table 10: Independent t-test comparing means of academic self concept according to work state

Variable	Street working children N = 56		Non-working children N = 32		T- value *Df* = 86	P value
	Mean	**SD**	**Mean**	**SD**		
Academic Self Concept	20.89	3.646	20.53	3.809	0.440	0.661

  *p< 0.05   **p< 0.01   ***p< 0.001

Table 11: Independent t-test comparing means of Anxiety according to work state

Variable	Street working children N = 56		Non-working children N = 32		T- value *df* = 86	P value
	Mean	**SD**	**Mean**	**SD**		
Anxiety	19.25	2.678	19.06	3.435	0.285	0.777

  *p< 0.05   **p< 0.01   ***p< 0.001

8.5. Anxiety

As shown in table 11; despite the high level of anxiety scored by the two groups, there are no significant statistical differences in the level of anxiety between the street working children and non-working children. (t = 0.285, df= 86, P= 0.777).

8.6. Moral Dimension

As shown in table 12; there are no significant statistical differences in the level of moral dimension between the street working children and non-working children.   (t = 0.958, df= 86, P= 0.341).

Table 12: Independent t-test comparing means of moral dimension according to work state

Variable	Street working children N = 56		Non-working children N = 32		T- value *Df* = 86	P value
	Mean	**SD**	**Mean**	**SD**		
Moral Dimension	21.82	3.417	21.03	4.208	0.958	0.341

*p< 0.05   **p< 0.01   ***p< 0.001

8.7. Familial Relations

As shown in table 13; there are no significant statistical differences in the level of familial relations between the street working children and non-working children. (t = 0.958, df= 86, P= 0.341).

Table 13: Independent t-test comparing means of familial relations according to work state

Variable	Street working children N = 56		Non-working children N = 32		T- value *Df* = 86	P value
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
Familial Relations	25.94	5.043	25.59	5.885	0.297	0.767

*p< 0.05   **p< 0.01   ***p<0.001

8.8. Independent - Dependent

As shown in table 14; there is a significant statistical difference in the level of independent- dependent trait between the street working

children and non-working children. The difference was in favor of non working children, children (t= 2.246, df= 86, P= 0.027).This means that the children who are not working are more independent than the street working children.

Table 14: Independent t-test comparing means of independent – dependent character according to work state

Variable	Street working children N = 56		Non-working children N = 32		T- value *Df* = 86	P value
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
Independent – Dependent	31.91	4.973	34.12	3.319	2.246	0.027 *

*p< 0.05   **p< 0.01   ***p<0.001

8.9 Aggression

As shown in table 15;; despite the high level of aggression scored by the two groups, there are no significan   t statistical differences in the level of aggression between the street working children and non-working children. (t= 0.958, df= 86, P= 0.341).

Table 15: Independent t-test comparing means of aggression according to work state

Variable	Street working children N = 56		Non-working children N = 32		T-value *Df* = 86	P value
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
Aggression	25.60	4.305	24.53	4.607	1.099	0.275

*p< 0.05   **p< 0.01   ***p<0.001

9. Interpretation and discusion of results

It is clear that there are no significant statistical differences, in all psychosocial characters except the Independent- Dependent character, between the street working and non-working children; such difference is in favor of non-working children.

The researcher does think that such outcome is logical and justified one for several reasons, one of which is that, all children in the two

groups are from the same community (Northern area of Gaza),and they have about the same economic status, so it seems that they mostly have the same values, tradition and costumes. Another reason is that, all people mainly children in the Palestinian Community are suffering from the same Political and socio-economic situation, therefore I really could argue that it seems that the impact, of such situation is bigger than the impact of working at street, on the children, and it also seems that such impact has been hidden and dissolved in a bigger one which is the impact of the current political and socio-economic situation and its consequences, knowing that such study was conducted during the siege which has been imposed on the Gaza Strip by the mid of 2007, accordingly , I really could also argue that living under the siege has unified the suffering of the Palestinian people in general and the Palestinian children in particular.

In addition, it also seems that street working as a phenomenon is acceptable phenomenon and appreciated by families and the Palestinian community, as a solution for economic hardship among the Palestinian families in the Palestinian Community (Taddi, 2007). Regarding the difference in the (independent-dependent) as a character between the street working children and non-working children, I really do think that such result could be also justified as follows, the outcome indicated that the difference is in favor of the non-working children; this means that the children who are not working, are more independent compared to the working children, as the street working children mostly are forced to spend all of their time in working, accordingly they do not catch the chance to practice any additional activities, therefore they feel as less independent persons compared to control group children. In the contrary, the non-working children have got enough time to practice several activities, and they are not required to work any kind of work, so they feel more independent compared to the case group. Despite the fact that there are no statistically significant differences nearly in all of the psychosocial characters between working and non working children, nevertheless, scores of both groups on the subscales of psychosocial characters have significant meaning and cannot be ignored in a way or another, as such scores reflect the reality of the Palestinian children in the northern part of the Gaza Strip especially under the imposed siege. As revealed by the research outcomes, both groups of children scored

relatively low scores on social and familial relations, this means that the children in both groups have got disturbed social and familial relations, mostly because of the hard economic status. This result matches the outcomes of previewed studies, the study of (Zaid, 2002, p.76) and (Taddi, 2007, p.117) as the two researches outcomes revealed that, family and social relations of the Palestinian children are affected by the economic status of their families. In addition the research outcomes revealed that children in both groups got high scores on aggression and anxiety subscales, this reflects the high level on aggression and anxiety among children in both groups, this result matches some previewed researches outcomes, the study of (Abu hein, 2008) and (Qouta & Ksab, 2008) as the former one revealed that 92% of the Palestinian children of Gaza Strip suffer from feeling of insecurity, anxiety and tension, and it also revealed that 76% of the Palestinian children, suffer from behavioral problems such as aggression (Abu hein, 2008, p.32). The later study outcome revealed that 63% of the Palestinian children of Gaza suffer from anxiety symptoms and fears. (Quota. & Ksab, 2008, p.30).Also as revealed by the research outcome, children in both groups got an average scores on the academic self concept subscale, the researcher does think that such result is logical one as it is coherent with the children's level of educational achievement in both groups, knowing that the academic self concept is always affected by the level of educational achievement of a student. (Cowell, D.1993, p.105).

As also revealed by the study outcomes, children in both groups got high scores on personality strength and moral dimensions, this reflects the strong structure of the Palestinian children personalities, despite the hard economic status, and the imposed siege on the Gaza Strip, this result is actually supported by the research outcomes conducted by (Altawel, 2008), such study examined the possible reasons for different reactions to chronic situations and trauma among the Palestinian children in the Gaza Strip; the outcomes revealed that the moderating factors and levels of influence which protected children from developing pathological symptoms as a result of trauma and hard situations are positive personality traits, ideological commitment, a network of psychosocial support entertainment and adaptation or acclimatization.(Altawel & Nel, 2008, p.64).

Conclusion:

This study concluded that there are no statistically significant differences in psychosocial characters between working and non working children in the northern part of the Gaza Strip, however it indicated that all children either working or non working children are at high risk of developing general mental health and behavior problems.

10. Recommendations

In the light of the study results; the researcher recommend the following:

- Counseling programs as psychosocial support should be given for working children and their families.
- Invite and motivate ministry of social affaires to introduce more protection, psychosocial, and economic support for the children.

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